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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 000577

STATE FOR WHA/BSC

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#) [CI](#)  
SUBJECT: CHILE AND BOLIVIA SIGN DEFENSE AGREEMENT

Classified By: E/Pol Counselor Juan A. Alsace. Reasons: 1.4 (b and d).

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The governments of Chile and Bolivia signed a historic defense agreement on June 16th designed to strengthen cooperation and trust between the two militaries. The agreement calls for greater transparency, mutual collaboration, and cooperation between police and military forces. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Defense Ministers Jose Goni of Chile and Walker San Miguel of Bolivia signed a defense agreement during Goni's visit to La Paz on June 16th. According to press reports, this was the first such accord since the two countries fought the 1879 War of the Pacific. The agreement highlights the exchange of defense intelligence, peacetime operations, bilateral cooperation to further military interests, greater transparency in defense expenditures, and measures to deactivate landmines along the Chilean-Bolivian border. The Defense Ministers signed the agreement one day before Chile and Bolivia met to continue discussions on the 13-point plan.

¶3. (SBU) Foreign Ministry Special Policies Officer Pablo Castro told Poloff June 17th that the agreement was general enough to be "politically safe" in both countries, while allowing the two defense ministries flexibility to pursue confidence-building measures designed to strengthen trust. Castro highlighted the de-mining cooperation and transparency in defense spending as two specific areas that, over the long run, could build additional confidence between Chilean and Bolivian defense sectors. Poloff asked if Chile's Foreign Ministry supported the agreement. Castro replied the MFA had blessed it in advance, adding that its content was consistent with the 13-point plan the two countries were discussing at the Deputy Foreign Minister-level.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: The agreement, which was in the works for some time, constitutes one of the most visible confidence-building measures in the eyes of Chile's Defense Ministry. Its contents remain largely unknown in Chile and it has received little press play. Nevertheless, Defense Ministry officials, interested in deepening relations with Bolivia, hope it will provide a framework for more concrete cooperation in the future.

SIMONS